1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

daughters of sovereigns were the princes and princesses of the realm. Princesses were often given in marriage by the king to create alliances between the throne and other states, or nobles, or as rewards to trusted followers. Often, one among the princes was designated Chiroma or heir apparent. However, there was no hard and fast rule that the Chiroma either had the title for life, or that having been graced by the title its holder automatically succeeded to the throne. Although there was no special term for royal granddaughter, a king's grandsons who might become princes, if their fathers obtained the throne, were referred to by a special term.

Attached to the royal household by bonds of strict loyalty and obedience were the king's followers, some of whom lived in the palace, while others lived nearby. These, known as Koguna, together with members of the royal family and their followers provided the basis for the nobility of the state. They were of two main types—slave and free—with slaves being divided into ordinary slaves and eunuchs. The slaves originated from the slave trade or from raids made among pagan groups, or from the sons and daughters of slaves. The free nobility came from deroyalized segments of the royal family as it expanded through time and from descendants of nobles. This nobility was the source of personnel for the bulk of the administrative activities of the state. They served as the monarch's personal bodyguard, as messengers, military commanders, tax collectors, trusted spies, praise singers, slave raiders, consuls, and foreign emissaries. From their ranks came the people who bore the major titles of the state. Some of the titles were derived from Islam; others came from earlier times in Kanem or Bornu history. Although much changed in their nature, a number of these have survived to the present day.

In order to administer the kingdom, titled nobles, including the titled women of the royal family, were given fiefs equivalent to what are today village area units. All such holdings were fragmented and dispersed so that no one noble had control over any large portion of the state. The fief holdings varied in size and number per noble and were a measure of the political success of that particular noble at any point in time. The one exception was the Galidima. The holder of this title maintained a large consolidated set of village areas on the western boundary to protect the east-west trade and guard the western approaches to the capital city. The fief-holders raised militia for the monarch and taxes for themselves and the monarch. They also served as an appeal court system for the local people when they wished adjudication at higher than the local level. Thus people could obtain a royal audience by going through the fief hierarchy. The Kanuri also used the widespread Sudanese practice of dividing the kingdom into quadrants based on the four cardinal directions. Over each quadrant was a highly trusted follower of the king who could oversee the administration of his own quadrant, raise direct royal tax levies, and serve as an alternative form of hierarchy between the people and their ruler. The system functioned in this way as a check on the power of fief-holders, since the king could take fiefs away and redistribute them if there was sufficient reason for doing so. Through their own subordinates these quadrant leaders also administered the nomadic peoples of the kingdom who could not be easily worked into the administration of the fief system based as it was on settled populations. Two of the four leaders were always eunuchs, making for an automatically free power of appointment by the monarch, since these men had no heirs. The other two were always chosen from among the king's closest associates, although there was also a

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Tributes could be quite large; there are records of payments from Kanem to Bornu in the sixteenth century that mention amounts of 1000 head of cattle per year.

Along with taxation and other demands such as annual military service, there was a system of exemption whereby persons or groups were released from their obligations to the state in return for some service—usually prayers and other religious duties. These exemptions, *Mabram*, were made by royal declaration in writing which stipulated that facets of a person's obligation were henceforward considered to be *haram* or forbidden, like the eating of pork. One of the oldest of these, given to the family of Umme Jilma, declares that the family is forever exempt from (a) entertaining the king's men during the dry-season military and tax collection campaigns, (b) from *diya* or blood compensation for injuries inflicted on others by accident, and (c) all forms of tribute and taxes. In time, however, all these exemptions were often honored more in the breach or renegotiated. Thus one sixteenth-century monarch ordered a large group to go to war. These people promptly refused on the basis of a *Mabram* given them by a previous ruler. When the king insisted, the entire group prepared to leave his kingdom. However a compromise was worked out in which they accepted military service and paid practically no taxes. This very same group is mentioned again in the traditions at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Shehu Laminu ruled that their exemptions should pertain only to the leaders of the group, not the entire set of male line descendants of the original holders of this privilege, who by this time had become a very large population.

In its apogee during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Bornu kingdom was an expansionist power, and warfare was the state function par excellence. According to traditions and written records, as many as seven or eight military campaigns a year were not uncommon; this meant an expedition might leave Bornu every six or eight weeks during the dry season. With so much militarism the techniques of warfare elaborated accordingly. From at least the sixteenth century onward, Bornu imported muskets, swords, chain mail which were vital and ancient parts of the Saharan trade, although such armaments were also manufactured by Bornu craftsmen as well.

The army itself was organized into regiments, representing a local area or an ethnic group under their own leaders, and they went into battle according to a well laid out military strategy. Campaigns were amost always conducted against walled towns. The shield bearers advanced first; then after it was felt that the poison arrows of the enemy were exhausted, the rest of the army would advance either storming the walls or forcing the town dwellers to come out and fight—whereupon muskets and cavalry were used. Generally speaking open encounters were quite unusual; the Bornu army was large, well disciplined, and well equipped, while the town dwellers were weak in all these respects and would usually try to flee once the siege went against them. Fallen towns were then mercilessly looted and the inhabitants killed or enslaved.

After the campaign and the distribution of booty by the leaders, the army disbanded. Leaders of various territorial ethnic groups swore allegiance to the king and arranged for the next campaign to be held so many days hence. At that time, criers were sent around to local markets stating the date and place of rendezvous for the army. Able bodied men were expected to go or send a representative bear-

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436 is to say, even those peasants marketing in the capital had not accepted the use of currency in 1850. Nevertheless some levels of the society must have been using the gursu (M.T. dollars) for some time, since Denham remarks that strips of cloth used for currency could be purchased in Bornu for forty to the M.T. dollar in the 1820's.(1) The market scenes observed by both Barth and earlier by Denham in the 19th century differ only slightly from those observed anywhere in Bornu today.

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721 As far as can be inferred from available sources, warfare and slave raiding made the life of the common people one of uneasy tension. Being the serf of one chief might not prevent a nearby potentate from sending out a raiding party which might easily clear out an entire local area of its inhabitants. The criterion which directed slave raiding only upon pagans was often honoured in the breach, especially if a chief's debts were [701] pressing. Again local life was often broken up by the feudal service in war which peasants owed to their chiefs. We are told in the history of Bornu of armies of thousands and campaigns which were waged annually year [182] after year for generations. In discussing this point, Denham felt that warfare resulted in a very mobile society where fortunes rose and fell rapidly and life as an intrinsic value was not highly regarded.(2) People in towns and villages, he says, are often mercilessly attacked and plundered. Accounts tell how the inhabitants, in attempting to fly, were caught by their attackers, whereupon, in most instances, the men were killed and the women and children lashed together and taken as slaves. Military men and their followers often died in droves on campaigns, widowing all their wives and concubines at one blow.

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In response to this constant warfare, villages in danger would

(1) Denham, D. and Clapperton; op. cit. p. 54
(2) Ibid; p. 135

175 In response to this constant warfare, villages in
361 danger would 29.
712 either build near hills, to which they would retire in case of attack, if they lived in the south, or hide the site in a bushy place with barricaded and camouflaged entrance paths to the town. They would often build large covered holes with spikes at the bottom to stop intruders, especially raiders on horseback. Again, many villages would construct large mud-stockaded walls for the same protective reason.

175 This pattern of constant warfare in Bornu is very old. The
721 contemporary record of the reign of Mai Idris Alooma, which has been pre-
178 served, is almost entirely an account of one military campaign after
175 another. Firearms have been used in Bornu for at least 400 years, and the
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178 first request that Shehu Lamino made of the European explorers, who found
175 their way there in the 1820's, was for a cannon.(1) The interest in war-
726 fare by the leaders was reflected in the highly organized manner in which warfare was conducted. Thus, before the battle witnessed by Denham, the
[701] Shehu inspected at military maneuvers of his troops. Each chief and slave commander (Kachella) had his own little "general staff" of close associates and when the order to advance on the enemy was given, each of these little "staffs" led their own groups forward. When the maneuvers were over, one of the groups was given the task for that day of watch and sentry duty for the entire camp.

173 Informants in Maiduguri recalled 24 Kachellas in pre-Rabeh
701 Bornu. Each had a "regiment" of cavalry and foot-soldiers, and the army was drawn into two divisions, under twelve Kachellas per unit. The first
[644] was called the "house" force. It generally remained close to the Shehu, and its soldiers constituted a standing army or palace guard whose primary duty was the protection of the monarchy. The second division was called the "bush" unit, not because it fought outside the capital, but rather be-

(1) Ibid., p. 149.

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701 cause its soldiers were peasant subjects and rural followers of fief holders, whose homes were not in the capital but out in the Bornu countryside. In the pre-19th century military system, each of the four regional military leaders (the Yuroma, Mustrema, Kaigama, and Yerima) had under him a force of Kachellas, each of which in turn headed up a regiment of foot-soldiers and cavalry.

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727 Very often a diplomatic Bornu ruler, after having defeated his enemy in battle would assess the situation and try to decide whether or not the chief of the opposing side (if Muslim) was worth keeping. If not he was executed. But very often the rebel or enemy leader was humbled, then raised up after a defeat and encouraged to become a loyal vassal of the King of Bornu.

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726 It is also interesting to note that at least part of the morale of Shehu Laminu's army resided in the general belief in his supernatural powers as a military leader. The night before the battle witnessed by Denham it was reported that Laminu had written charms (verses from the Koran) and his enemies' spears and arrows were blunted and found so in the morning by their owners on the day of battle. Laminu was extremely anxious that Denham set off a rocket for him on the night before the battle, presumably for the same reason.

War itself was highly organized. The maintenance of the state required elaborate rituals and ceremonies to dramatize militarism, and the belief in the supernatural power of the leader or his religious associates helped maintain the morale of the army, which was also goaded on by a comprehensive system of sharing in the plunder. However, this tended to create for the average citizen an areal mobility not usually associated
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721 with peasant life in Africa. A man might return from the wars to his village on the borders of the state to find no village, nor wife, nor home,

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642 most useful institution, in teres of survival, was the organisation of a feudal state. Under the king, the nobility had their own fiefs which validated their status in the state and insured their all-important military cooperation. It was indicated in the chapter that this kind of organization has been used historically in Bornu for incorporating entire tribes into the Kanuri state, if such was desirable.

The major point, however, is the legacy of the state organization which the historical development of Kanuri feudalism has maintained. [701] A well ordered and easily expandable war machine for the offensive and defensive policies of the state was a primary result of the feudal organ- [692] ization. Once these structural principles were in operation, taxation [652] and a hierarchical political and judicial system became possible and operative over a wide territory.

178 The presence of a capital city with a large administrative
633 and military class served as a stimulus for the specialization of labour.
463 This body of people was an ever-ready market for the sale of surplus
433 subsistence produce and a wide range of specialized manufactured materials
439 of local and imported origin, which in turn stimulated trade and the development of the market from the very earliest days of the kingdom.

178 Another of the contributory strengths of Kanuri feudalism in
642 terms of survival was its flexibility, that is to say, its ability to expand and contract from the center. As long as the nucleus of a court and a monarch remained, no harm was done to its continued existence. Feudalism is a segmentary corporate structure; if the top remains, including the idea of its centrality and paramount position in the conception of the state, then the expansion and contraction of the state itself bears no relation whatsoever to its survival. Segments may break off, others may join on, but as long as there remains the tangible concept of some-